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# Applying Marxism to Critical Terrorism Studies: Analysis through a Historical Materialist Lens

By

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## Introduction

Extrapolating from Marx’s articulation of a materialist conception of history, we argue that a Historical Materialist (HM) approach provides scholars of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) with a useful framework to research terroristic violence. This involves an analysis of the political and economic contexts of terrorism and ancillary social relations within capitalist development, including class inequalities, modes of exploitation, and imperialist domination, amongst others. Moreover, we believe that elucidating how CTS can apply a HM approach to analyze the links between terrorism and capitalism is important given that, as Jonathan Joseph (2011, 27) highlights: “It is fair to say that CTS makes some reference to historical materialism but pays little attention to the nature of capitalist society.”

As HM is a diverse academic tradition and can cover a panoply of political and economic processes, it does not fit the scope of this chapter to discuss all the ways in which HM can be employed to analyze terrorism. Instead, we focus on four key ways in which a HM approach can be applied to terrorism research to uncover insights into terroristic violence and capitalist development. Firstly, we discuss how HM constitutes a political economy approach which entails close scrutiny of the interplay between political and economic aspects of terrorism at the subnational, national and international levels. Secondly, we highlight how Marxist assumptions regarding violence, capitalism and social relations can provide critical insights into the class aspect of terroristic violence. Thirdly, we argue that, through an appreciation of the often violent character of globalized capitalism, a HM framework provides a useful corrective to liberal scholarship which often assumes political violence to be inimical to economic development. In contrast, a HM framework allows us to analyze how violence, including terrorism, can be linked to the advancement of globalized capitalism. Finally, we discuss theories of imperialism in the context of terrorism and globalization. We then proceed to discuss how we conduct our own research and provide examples of this research.

In terms of capitalist development, this chapter discusses what is commonly referred to as neo-liberal globalization, an economic model which, since the 1970s, has been fervently pushed by the US government and powerful international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. During the 1980s (under former US President Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) and 1990s (after the fall of the Soviet Union), this neo-liberal economic model rapidly expanded across the globe and today pervades the global political economy. Based on free market capitalism, this economic model was famously described by John Williamson as the “Washington Consensus” and includes (*inter alia*) fiscal

discipline, trade liberalization, privatization, liberalization of foreign direct investment (FDI) and deregulation (e.g., Williamson 1990). As Blakeley (2009, 5) describes, neo-liberal economics typically involves “the opening up of previously closed economies to the forces of economic competition,” with a focus on “globalized rather than national economics” ensuring “the globalization of the political economy along specific lines.” With increases in income inequality and a reduction in labor’s share of income, neo-liberalism is described as a hegemonic political and economic project which, following a period of declining income disparity after the Great Depression and World War II, is re-establishing power and concentrations of wealth into the hands of the ruling elite (Chomsky 1999; Duménil & Lévy 2004; Harvey 2005; Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010). Within this context, this chapter highlights how a HM approach can uncover important insights into neo-liberal economics and terrorism.

### **A HM Framework: A Marxist Political Economy Approach**

To elucidate the “critical” aspects of Historical Materialism in the context of terrorism studies, it is first necessary to discuss the work of Karl Marx, the progenitor of the HM approach. While Marx did not refer to the term “historical materialism” himself, through his critique of political economy he nonetheless articulated a materialist conception of history positing that the social relations of production have a broader constitutional effect on the “general process of social, political and intellectual life” (Marx 1990, 175, footnote 35). In this way, capitalism should not be understood myopically: it is not simply an economic system, but constitutes a whole way of being and acting. Capitalism is thus a political, economic and social force that shapes and continually interacts with certain outcomes, including terrorism.

Building on the critical work of Marx, then, a HM framework of analysis constitutes a political economy approach to social inquiry. As Benjamin Cohen (2008, 80) observes, “The ‘materialism’ in historical materialism means placing economic relations and the social organization of production at the center of analysis.” The “historical” component, as Robert Cox (1996, 88) describes, provides a “theory of history in the sense of being concerned not just with the past but with a continuing process of historical change.” Importantly, then, the core component of a HM framework is its acknowledgement of the mutual constitution of the political and economic spheres. Indeed, one prominent Historical Materialist, William Robinson (2003, 43), has implored social and political analysis more generally to overcome the restrictive Weberian separation of “markets” and “states” as related but separate analytical concepts. Drawing from similar Marxian principles, numerous scholars have also advocated a political economy approach to the study of terrorism which is attentive to the interplay between these spheres (Herring and Stokes 2011; Porpora 2011; Herring 2008).

HM therefore provides terrorism scholarship a way of understanding and analyzing the broader political and economic contexts in which terrorism occurs, including the historically specific dynamics of capitalist development. In the milieu of neo-liberal globalization, a HM approach moves beyond simply analyzing states/non-state actors (political sphere) and markets (economic sphere) to encompass a range of political and economic entities and activities. For example, analysis can investigate links between a wide range of political actions (e.g., neo-liberal policies, foreign aid, security, and, crucially, political violence such as terrorism) and economic factors (e.g., trade agreements, economic growth, FDI, international trade, amongst many possibilities).

This provides a broader framework for explaining the structural logics of capitalist development (through such notions as neo-liberal globalization) and how these logics link with political violence (such as terrorism). Importantly, then, whilst most analyses of terrorism tend to focus on the political motivations behind terroristic violence, a HM approach instead allows for the study of both the political *and* economic motives underpinning such violence (see Maher and Thomson 2011). Therefore, by adopting a political economy framework acknowledging the inextricable linkages between the political and economic spheres, a fuller understanding of terrorism can be attained.

### **Bringing Social Relations and Class into Critical Terrorism Studies**

Further drawing from Marx's materialist conception of history, the analysis of class relations is also central to a HM approach. Marx observed that the social relations of production underpin the very nature of class relations. He distinguished between the minority who own the means of production (namely, the bourgeoisie or capitalist class) vis-à-vis the majority (namely, the proletariat) who, to survive, are forced to sell their labor-power to this dominant, capitalist class. Moreover, the capitalist class extracts surplus value from the labor provided by the proletariat, which is integral to capitalist accumulation. In other words, the valorization of capital is based on the production of commodities which contain more labor than the capitalist has paid for (Marx, 1990, 769). This unequal ownership of the means of production and the exploitation by one class (bourgeoisie) of another (proletariat) produces class antagonisms and conflict. Indeed, such class antagonisms have been a driving force underpinning historical development; as Marx and Engels famously wrote: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx and Engels, 1992, 1). For our purposes here, this provides a class-based understanding of how certain political and economic structures are both contested and stabilized through political violence.

Terrorism is a specific tactic, within a spectrum of political violence, used by both bourgeois and proletariat sections of society in order to oppose or advance certain political and economic configurations. Within this, terrorism can be analyzed as embedded within the context of unfolding dynamic class relations: a manifestation of social interaction predicated on the ownership of the means of production by the few who exploit the many. The study of terrorism from a HM perspective therefore requires examination of class hierarchies, class antagonisms, and broader political and economic inequalities. Indeed, as Jonathan Joseph (2011, 34) has argued, "terrorism can only be understood by a thorough understanding of a complex set of social relations, the investigation of which require a lot more than just looking at beliefs and motivations." Therefore, analysis should appreciate the complexities of class relations in the context of terrorism; as Herring (2008, 200) argues: "The class role that terrorism plays may be functional or dysfunctional and driven by complex interaction of fractions of classes and elites (subnational, national, transnational) and progressive or reactionary opposition."

In this light, one important implication of this approach is that terrorism is understood as a tactic that can be used by opposing class groups, rather than, say, simply a "weapon of the weak" to challenge the state. HM thus helps to explain both non-state terrorism and state terrorism (discussed below) as interconnected in the contestation and stabilization of capitalist social relations and the prevailing political and economic order (McKeown 2011; Porpora 2011, 53). Rather than understanding non-state (e.g., revolutionary) terrorism and state terror as separate categories unto themselves (regardless of how

qualitatively different they may be), they are understood as occurring within the contours of unfolding capitalist development. Importantly, this implies that while terrorism can be used to contest oppressive modes of elite domination, it can also aid in the advancement of capitalism itself.

### **Linking Terrorism to Capitalist Development**

Another core component of Marx's analysis of capitalism is the understanding of capitalist development as a dialectical process within which violence, including terrorism, is a central component. As McKeown (2011) correctly points out, a Marxist theory of international social relations can broaden our knowledge of terrorism because it is essentially a theory which "is rooted in the study of social conflict." For example, Marx took issue with classical liberal thinkers such as Adam Smith for positing that the original accumulation of capital (and thus the very formation of the capitalist elite) was achieved through the diligence, intelligence and frugality of the elite, vis-à-vis the lazy and profligate majority (Marx 1990, 873). In contrast, Marx gave a distinct version of what he labeled the primitive accumulation of capital, which was underpinned by violence. Indeed, Marx (1990, 875) famously wrote that the historical transmogrification of the feudal system to a capitalist mode of production "is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire." Marx thus argued that the primitive accumulation of capital involved:

The spoliation of the Church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the state domains, the theft of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of ruthless terrorism, all these things were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalist agriculture, incorporated the soil into capital, and created for the urban industries the necessary supplies of free and rightless proletarians. (Marx 1990, 895)

From a Marxist perspective, then, capitalism was violent in its incipency and, in many places, continues to be violent today.<sup>1</sup>

We argue that this acknowledgement forms a very important critique (amongst others) of core assumptions regarding the economic effects of terrorism that currently pervade much of terrorism studies. That is to say, borrowing from the same classical liberal thinkers Marx critiqued, contemporary liberal scholarship tends to assume that political violence such as terrorism is inimical to economic growth and "progress," especially in developing countries (for a good overview, see Cramer, 2006; for studies, see Keefer & Loayza, 2008; Sandler & Enders, 2008; Gaibullov & Sandler, 2011). For example, studies suggest that terrorism inhibits a country's economic development by discouraging FDI, curtailing international trade, destroying infrastructure, and redirecting public funds to finance security (for an overview, see Sandler & Enders, 2008). Moreover, even when studies have acknowledged that not all terroristic violence is linked to economic decline, the possibility of some forms of terrorism to bolster economic processes is completely overlooked. This is exemplified in a recent study by Powers and Choi (2012), who attempt to show how different types of terrorism affect inflows of FDI. The authors argue

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<sup>1</sup> The application of primitive accumulation (and its closely related derivatives such as David Harvey's accumulation by dispossession) to contemporary debates can be contested (e.g., see Glassman 2006). However, critical scholars typically converge in the acceptance that capitalist accumulation was violent its incipency and continues to be violent in many areas of the world. It is this broad framework which we employ throughout this chapter.

that “business related terrorism” (i.e., terrorism which targets the assets and employees of multinational corporations) has a negative impact on a country’s ability to attract FDI inflows; so-called “non-business related terrorism” (i.e., terrorism which does not target the interests of foreign companies) had no significant effect. What is entirely missing from these studies, and many others like it, is any consideration of what we might term “pro-business terrorism.” In other words, how acts of terrorism can serve the interests of foreign capital and thus stimulate FDI inflows. What is also missing is how so-called “non-business related terrorism,” whilst not targeting the interests of investors, may in fact serve the interests of capital in an extended pattern of capital accumulation. For example, whilst the logic of capitalism often requires stability to promote predictability, instability caused through violence can also be of interest to foreign capital, especially if such violence can disrupt existing rights to assets (e.g., land or natural resources), exclude local interests and present new ownership and investment opportunities to foreign capital (Cramer 2006, 233). As Cramer (2006) has noted, violence has been and often still is “part of the economy, not simply a brake on it,” contrary to liberal assumptions.

We believe that a HM framework can provide a corrective to such oversights, and the acknowledgement of the often violent characteristics of capitalist expansion is an important step towards analyzing terrorism through a HM lens. That is to say, a HM framework provides the conceptual and theoretical tools necessary to examine the use of terrorism in processes of capital accumulation and capitalist development. It aids researchers in tracing the violent tendencies of neo-liberal globalization by emphasizing a political economy model of analysis which places class hierarchies (as well as other inequalities of power, for example, gender relations) at the center of investigation. Pertinent to terrorism debates, these class hierarchies are, according to a Marxist framework, typically manifested within the state. At this juncture, then, it is necessary to discuss the concept of state terrorism.

### **HM and State Terrorism**

We understand state terrorism as the “intentional use or threat of violence by state agents or their proxies against individuals or groups who are victimized for the purpose of intimidating or frightening a broader audience” (Jackson et al. 2010, 3). Further, state terror involves deliberate acts of violence targeted at individuals that the state has a duty to protect (Blakeley 2010, 15). With its emphasis on class structures and the violent characteristics of capitalist development, a HM framework which is rooted in Marxist theory is particularly adept at analyzing the role of the state in the context of terrorism.

Pertinently, the state itself is understood in the Marxist tradition to be a manifestation or expression of specific social relations. As Robinson argues, in

Marx’s view, the state gives a political form to economic institutions and production relations. Consequently, the economic globalization of capital cannot be a phenomenon isolated from the transformation of states and of class relations. The state is the congealment of particular and historically determined constellations of class forces and relations, and states are always embodied in sets of political institutions. Hence states are: a) a moment of class and social power relations; and b) a set of political institutions (an “apparatus”). (Robinson 2003, 43)

Furthermore, from a Marxist perspective, the state is a tool of elite domination that typically serves the interests of the bourgeoisie often at the expense of the proletariat. As Marx and Engels (1992, 5) wrote: “The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” Whilst the state has undoubtedly changed since the time of Karl Marx’s life (1818-1883), the global economic crisis has for many demonstrated Marx and Engels’ point well: whilst some governments have increasingly implemented austerity measures to curb social spending, the same governments have provided munificent bailout packages for major banks.

In a similar light, terroristic violence perpetrated by states or groups sponsored by governments can serve the interests of the bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the proletariat. For instance, constituting the “first experiment with neoliberal state formation” (Harvey 2005, 7), the military junta of General Augusto Pinochet implemented and entrenched the neo-liberal economic model in Chile through the widespread terrorization of the civilian population. Pinochet’s dictatorship (1973-1990), wholly backed by the US, brutally repressed political, social and civilian groups deemed inimical to neo-liberal free market capitalism, including leftist political groups, trade unions and peasant movements. Moreover, this type of terrorism is much more prevalent than non-state terrorism which challenges the interests of the bourgeoisie (Blakeley 2009).

In this regard, a HM framework is particularly useful in examining state terrorism. HM allows for sustained analysis of the political and economic structures that have enabled and conditioned state terror. It does so by situating state terrorism in relation to class frictions and elite concentration of power within and through the state. By adopting a HM framework, one can locate the structural sources of state terror within the broader schema of the historical development of capitalism, in which terror is used to make available and stabilize particular political and economic arrangements conducive to capitalist interests. As Robinson (2004, 137-8) highlights, “Global capitalism requires an apparatus of direct coercion to open up zones that may fall under renegade control, to impose order, and to repress rebellion that threatens the stability or security of the system.” Counterinsurgency, for example, is a politico-military strategy that often results in terroristic means to stabilize beneficent political and economic structures (Stokes 2005, Hristov 2009, Maher and Thomson 2011). In summary, a HM framework can help to unpack how and why the state can represent an “apparatus of direct coercion” through which elite capitalist interests are pursued using terroristic means.

Such an examination of the global dimensions of state terrorism also introduces notions of imperialism into this mix. Imperialism contextualizes the hierarchical power relations between nations and classes internationally through which capitalist interests can be pursued. McKeown (2011, 77) states, for instance, that “the theory of capitalist imperialism necessarily situates the use of state terrorism in an international capitalist system in which capital accumulation takes place within the context of international class conflict and/or cooperation between competing sets of ruling classes within both developed and underdeveloped countries.” In this way, scholars have been able to analyze state terrorism within the context of imperialist foreign policies in pursuit of sustaining favorable capitalist arrangements abroad. This is discussed in more detail below.

## **A HM Framework Applied**

Hitherto, our own research follows these trends in examining the political and economic frameworks conditioning the use of state terror in Colombia. To recap, subscribing to the framework we have outlined above, our research (1) adopts a political economy approach that is attentive to the mutual constitution of the political and economic spheres; (2) investigates these political and economic processes in the context of antagonistic class relations; (3) acknowledges the often violent characteristics of globalized capitalism; and (4) incorporates theories of imperialism in order to analyze the global dimensions of state terror.

To apply this critical framework, we fall into what Cohen has described as the “British School” of International Political Economy, namely, an interdisciplinary approach which, in contrast to the “American School,” is “less wedded to conventional social science methodology,” is skeptical about “rational choice” models, and generally “rejects a positivist epistemology” (Cohen 2009, 396). At the same time, such an approach pursues “analytical eclecticism” and constitutes a “pragmatic research style that is willing to borrow concepts, theories, and methods from a variety of scholarly traditions as needed to address socially important problems” (Cohen 2009, 400). In this light, we do acknowledge that critical theories could be open to certain methods (including variable-based regression analyses, for example) which can identify regularities in human behavior and social phenomena. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that “these methods are insufficient on their own because they cannot identify the deeper, underlying nature of reality and they reduce the causal powers and liabilities of things to their actual exercise” (Joseph 2011, 26).

We also advocate research designs which focus on detailed, individual case study analyses. This enables the use of process-tracing, whereby “the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case” (George & Bennet 2005, 6). In the context of terrorism and economic development, processes may include (amongst others) economic growth, inflows of FDI, levels of international trade, trade agreements, and, importantly, patterns of terroristic violence. In the following example, to investigate the links between terrorism and economic development through a method of process tracing, we have mainly relied on descriptive statistics, economic data, accounts of observers “on the ground”, and other documentary evidence, which includes US and Colombian government reports and declassified US diplomatic cables, studies conducted by non-governmental agencies, as well as reports published by the UN and the Organization of American States.

### **Case study: Colombia**

Colombia has been embroiled in a civil war since at least the 1960s. Powerful armed groups within this civil war – including left-wing guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries – are labeled as terrorist organizations by the US and EU. These armed groups have indeed committed violent acts of terror, including torture, murder, massacres, kidnapping and widespread forced displacement. However, it is important to acknowledge the deep and well documented links between Colombia’s security forces and right-wing paramilitary groups throughout the country (e.g., see Amnesty International, 2004; Human



Rights Watch 2010; Maher & Thomson, 2011).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Colombia's security forces have been complicit with and had direct involvement in civilian massacres and have been responsible for the extra-judicial killings of thousands of civilians. This includes the so-called "false positives" scandal, whereby, since 1986, the Colombian armed forces have executed approximately 3,900 civilians and presented them as guerrilla insurgents killed in combat. These so-called "false positive" executions intensified between 2002 and 2008 when 3,470 civilians were killed, representing 89% of total "false positive" deaths (see Colombia Reports, 2013).

The impact of violence perpetrated by Colombia's armed actors is perhaps best highlighted by the number of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) recorded by the Government of Colombia (GOC). Indeed, forced displacement is an acute problem in Colombia, with the GOC recording more IDPs than any other country in the world (IDMC, 2012). Currently, this number stands at 4-5 million people (depending on the source), over 10% of Colombia's total population. Moreover, according to the GOC's own statistics, almost 80% of forced displacement occurred between 2000-2009 (Acción Social 2011). Therefore, forced displacement intensified during the 2000s.

In the midst of this endemic violence, Colombia's government has developed the country's economy according to a neo-liberal economic model. Since 1991, in a process known as *la apertura económica* (the economic opening), and continuing to the present day, the Colombian government has fervently implemented neo-liberal economic reforms, based (*inter alia*) on deregulation, privatization, encouraging international trade, and attracting foreign direct investors. Moreover, during periods of intensifying violence, the economy has exhibited robust economic growth, especially during the 2000s. For example, average GDP per capita was 2.5% between 2000 and 2009, higher than the regional average of 1.8% during this period (see World Bank, n.d.). Similarly, since 2001, Colombia has attracted a very high level of FDI, with FDI stock rising from \$15.4 billion in 2001 to \$95.7 billion in 2011, an average annual growth rate of 21% (UNCTAD, n.d.). By using a HM framework, we thus inquire from the outset if terroristic violence has bolstered Colombia's economic growth and facilitated the entrenchment of the neo-liberal economic model. This provides critical insights when compared to adopting a liberal framework, which, as noted, can overlook such crucial observations by assuming that economic growth declines with violence or occurs *in spite* of terrorism.

We argue that terrorism perpetrated by the state and its "proxy army of paramilitary fighters" (Maher and Thomson 2011, 106) has created economic opportunities for both domestic and foreign capital in Colombia by clearing large swathes of land for commercial activities. Indeed, forced displacement should not be viewed as a vicissitude of armed combat between actors in Colombia's internal armed conflict. Rather, it is a concerted strategy of war to "spread territorial control and diversify funding sources," and functions as "a low cost and effective strategy for clearing out territories" (Ibáñez & Vélez 2008, 661). Moreover, forced displacement is a tactic most commonly employed by paramilitary groups (e.g., see Ibáñez & Vélez, 2008, 661), followed by the military (Leech 2011, 131). In particular, forced displacement has cleared areas for oil exploration (Colombia's largest sector in terms of FDI and exports) and has

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<sup>2</sup> There are also well documented links between large sections of Colombia's political class and right-wing paramilitaries (e.g., IHRCLC, 2010). Such a discussion, however, does not fit the scope of this chapter, which instead focuses on the links between Colombia's security forces and paramilitary groups.

opened-up large areas of land needed for emerging agro-industrial export crops such as palm oil. This displacement has largely (but not exclusively) occurred in rural areas where the majority of Colombia's natural resources and agro-industrial projects are found. Thus, there has been widespread displacement of *campesino* farmers and indigenous groups who often live in areas of economic interest. In short, we argue that: "Large sections of Colombia's citizenry continue to abandon their lands as they are forcibly displaced from their homes, satisfying the voracious appetite of foreign (mainly US) multinational corporations (MNCs) for Colombian territory as the neo-liberal economic program is further entrenched in Colombian society" (Maher and Thomson, 2011, 96).

In a similar light, we argue that state-paramilitary terror has systematically targeted groups deemed inimical to the expansion and entrenchment of Colombia's neo-liberal economic model. Whilst this includes the targeting of Colombia's left-wing guerrillas, who often attack the interests and employees of domestic and foreign companies, it is imperative to acknowledge the systematic targeting of civilian groups. This includes trade unions which seek to improve working conditions and wages, incurring additional costs for capital which ultimately lowers profitability. In fact, in 2010, more trade unionists were murdered in Colombia than the rest of the world combined (ITUC, 2011). As with forced displacement, the right-wing paramilitaries are responsible for the majority of violence against Colombia's trade unionists, followed by Colombia's security forces (e.g., see ITUC 2012). The targeting of these groups has thus "made Colombia very attractive to foreign investment as poor working conditions and low wages keep profit margins high" (Maher and Thomson, 2011, 96). Further, it is important to note that, whilst clearing land for commercial activities, the high levels of forced displacement in Colombia are also aimed at "impeding collective action, damaging social networks, and intimidating and controlling [the] civilian population" (Ibáñez & Vélez 2008, 662).

In light of the very high levels of forced displacement and widespread attacks on Colombia's organized labor movement, the implementation of Colombia's neo-liberal economic model and strong economic development outlined above has not seriously tackled the acute levels of poverty and inequality in the country. In fact, whilst levels of inequality have undulated, wealth distribution in Colombia has worsened since Colombia's neo-liberal economic model was implemented in 1991, when the richest 10% of Colombia's population held a 39.5% share of the country's total income; by 2010, the figure stood at 44.4% (World Bank, 2012). Economic growth in Colombia has therefore benefited domestic and foreign capital much to the expense of the wider Colombian population. In the context of security, this is especially the case for the millions of Colombia's citizens who have been forcibly displaced, the thousands of trade unionists who are systematically targeted by the state-paramilitaries, as well as the millions of Colombians who continue to live below the poverty line and who today realize a lower proportion of Colombia's income compared to when the neo-liberal economic model was implemented in 1991.

A final component of this research focuses on the central role of US intervention. By adopting a HM lens, we are able to link Colombia's internally directed system of state terror to a transnational imperialist dimension. As the hegemon in the post-world war II era, the US has played the lead managerial role in the global capitalist system (Panitch and Gindin 2004; Bromley 2006). Following the logic of capitalist imperialism, the US has served to underwrite the stability and fluid functioning of capitalism in the periphery, in order to maintain access to resources and markets. The US has done so through various

methods; nevertheless, pertinent to this chapter, US administrations have often bolstered the military capability of allies within peripheral countries to thwart internal threats (Stokes and Raphael 2010; Blakeley 2009; Robinson 2003). In Colombia, the US government has granted substantial military aid packages (including military training) in order to armor Colombia's neo-liberalization from the country's left-wing guerrilla groups (the FARC and the ELN). Indeed, despite well documented links to paramilitary groups and continued human rights violations perpetrated by Colombia's public forces, since 2000, the US government has provided over \$8 billion of aid to Colombia, the majority of which has been channeled into Colombia's security forces. Whilst billed as an anti-narcotics program, this aid has consistently had counterinsurgency motivations at its core (Hristov 2009; Stokes 2005). While the counterinsurgency effort has aimed primarily to destroy Colombia's insurgency, it has also systematically targeted progressive unarmed movements considered inimical to the implementation of neo-liberal structural reforms. Moreover, whilst the states' security forces have been responsible for a large proportion of violations, a good deal of this state terror has been orchestrated by state-linked paramilitary groups, and often in concert with the Colombian armed forces. As Stokes and Raphael (2010, 71) argue, the US counterinsurgency doctrine has explicitly advocated tight relationships between state armed forces and the pervasive use of paramilitaries. Such terrorism has served to insulate Colombia's elite from the prospect of radical political change from "below," and to maintain and advance capitalist political and economic structures underpinning the US-led global economy.

## **Conclusion**

A HM lens provides a way to understand and examine terrorism and counterterrorism as embedded within a wider set of dynamic and changing social relations. This moves beyond dominant dichotomous interpretations of state and non-state terrorism, political versus economic terrorism, and political or criminal terrorism as distinct categories. Instead, HM accounts for terrorism and other forms of violence as being embedded in and a manifestation of a set of complex and ever-changing social relations (Joseph 2011).

Importantly, such a framework acknowledges the marriage of the political and economic spheres, and how this can provide critical insights into terrorism. This includes the importance of class relations, the appreciation of capitalism as an often violent mode of economic development, and how the political and economic motivations underpinning some forms of terrorism can be integral to imperialism. The case of Colombia demonstrates this well: economic development has occurred during periods of intensifying violence. Rather than understanding this economic development as occurring *in spite of* terroristic violence, we have instead applied a HM approach which unpacks crucial links between violence and economic processes which more liberal frameworks often overlook. That is to say, we have argued that terrorism perpetrated by the Colombian armed forces and right-wing paramilitary groups, including widespread forced displacement and attacks on civilian groups deemed inimical to the neo-liberal economic model, has stimulated levels of FDI, international trade and the resultant economic growth. Moreover, since 1991, this economic growth has been increasingly distributed unequally. It is primarily domestic and foreign investors that have benefitted from this neo-liberal model vis-à-vis the majority of Colombians, which is especially the case for the millions of Colombians affected by state and state-sponsored terrorism.

As we have argued, HM can be used to unveil valuable insights into the links between terrorism and capitalist development. In this light, and referring back to Joseph's observation outlined in the introduction to this chapter, CTS can benefit from a HM framework by paying careful attention to the nature of capitalism, especially in terms of how terrorism interacts with the social relations of production.

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